

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

August 3, 2010

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Leggett:

The BRAC Implementation Committee (BIC) is taking this opportunity to share its thoughts with you as projects to mitigate BRAC-related traffic begin to take shape. The September 2011 deadline is rapidly approaching for the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center to be fully operational, so there is an urgent need to ensure that traffic mitigations that address the immediate transformation of Bethesda Naval Hospital also address long-term impacts on mobility around the medical center and quality of life in the surrounding community.

Clearly, the hard work of more than three years of planning is beginning to show results. The responsible state, local and federal agencies involved in this complex endeavor must be congratulated for making substantial efforts to coordinate and communicate with each other and the community stakeholders.

Over three years the BIC has developed a BRAC Mobility Projects Matrix with recommended traffic mitigations, many of which are under way:

- The Montgomery County Planning Board is holding Mandatory Referral hearings on the State Highway Administration's Intersections Improvement Project and the County's Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths project;
- The MD 355 Crossing Project is currently undergoing an environmental study by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation;
- The Navy is implementing a robust Transportation Demand Management program, including significant upgrades to its gates and internal roadways, and measures to encourage its personnel to utilize alternative modes of transportation;
- The Maryland Transit Administration is holding hearings on adding commuter bus service from central Maryland to the Medical Center via the Inter County Connector; and
- Our Congressional delegation is working hard to procure desperately needed federal funding to help implement these projects.

At this point the State has budgeted approximately \$30 million for the Intersections project and the County \$5 million to construct the Pedestrian and Bike Paths following completion of the Facilities Study that is funded under a grant from the Defense Department's Office of Economic Adjustment. If the matter of federal funding can be resolved successfully, State and County transportation planners will be able to move forward with significant construction on these projects and the MD 355 Crossing Project.

With the potential for significant construction at hand, the BIC wants to reiterate its long-standing concern that these projects be constructed in a manner that preserves and promotes the ideals of livable communities – mobility, walkability, and a strong quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors to the community – including the active, wounded and retired military and their families who will frequent the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda.

These projects must be coordinated among the disparate agencies to avoid design and construction conflicts, and should when practicable incorporate Park & Planning Board recommendations on landscaping, handicapped accessibility, and pedestrian safety. A priority for many BIC members is that the various agencies work together for the inclusion of "Kiss and Ride" drop-off access to the Navy Med campus on Rockville Pike and Jones Bridge Road.

Short term projects must not preclude long term objectives. These objectives include constructing shared use paths along Jones Bridge Road and Cedar Lane, study of a county-wide Bus Rapid Transit System that includes service to the Medical Center, ensuring safety and mobility in the Chevy Chase Valley community, and connecting transit oriented communities in downtown Bethesda, Chevy Chase Lake and White Flint.

We appreciate your continued interest in the input by the communities that travel this area routinely and throughout the day. It is through a thorough understanding of where the challenges are and how we hope to accommodate the influx of staff, patients and visitors that we will be able to provide the necessary support to ensure that the mission of the new Walter Reed. The BIC urges you to keep working for the fullest funding possible for these mobility projects from federal, state and county sources. Adequate mobility in the surrounding area will be essential both for ensuring Walter Reed's success and the quality of life in the surrounding area.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John H. Carman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John H. Carman, Chair
Montgomery County BRAC
Implementation Committee

(per PRA)